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France vs. America

by Ralph R. Reiland

Ever vigilant to go the extra mile to keep the world free from bloody tyrants, the French last week banned a party of French school children from visiting Britain because of Tony Blair's backing of the war against Iraq. Better that the kids stay home in their French classrooms and develop their view of the world by watching Michael Moore's America-bashing Bowling for Columbine.

Moore's film became a certified part of the French national curriculum after winning the "Cannes Prix Educational National Award," voted on by hundreds of French teachers and students. The film also made French history by being the first documentary chosen in nearly 50 years to be part of the official Cannes Film Festival competition. Hands down, Bowling for Columbine won the festival's 55th Anniversary Special Prize. "It was the only prize awarded," explains Moore, "that received a unanimous decision from the festival jury."

What the jurors unanimously liked was the picture Moore painted of America, a wild-eyed nation of militia crazies, gun nuts, military bravado, imperialistic warmongers and dull-witted suburban fathers who shuffle off to their jobs at Lockheed Martin each morning to make weapons of mass destruction while their trigger-happy kids are over at Columbine High, first going to bowling class in the morning and then blasting their classmates to smithereens.

In fact, the shooters at Columbine *didn't* go bowling on the morning of the day of the killings, and the Lockheed Martin plant in Littleton *doesn't* make weapons. It makes space launch vehicles for TV satellites. More importantly, there's nothing in the film to remind French students that they might well be watching Moore's movie with German subtitles if it were not for American defense contractors and American bravado.

FUDGE

In another segment of his film, Moore focuses on a 6-year-old boy in Michigan who shot and killed a 6-year-old girl and blames welfare reform. Moore shows that the boy's mother was away from home at two work-for-welfare jobs for some 70 hours a week, thereby allowing the boy to find a loaded gun at a relative's house while his

mother was being forced to “ride a bus for an hour and a half each day to serve drinks and make fudge for rich people.”

What Moore *doesn't* report is that not only is welfare dependency dramatically down since welfare reform but also that the poverty rate is down and that families previously on welfare are faring significantly better financially since reforms were enacted in 1996. What Moore also leaves out of his film is the fact that the relative's house, as described by Matt Labash of the Weekly Standard, was “a crack house, where guns were often traded for drugs.”

The French school kids, of course, won't learn about the crack—just the fudge. They'll learn that welfare is good and capitalism is bad. They'll learn that greedy white people in America (too cheap to pay for welfare) turned a 6-year-old into a killer. They'll learn that Columbine High was quintessentially American. They'll learn that the poor are poor because the rich are rich—that it's a zero-sum game in which every gain for the rich comes out of the hide of the poor, and that the Third World is weak because America is strong, and that people are subjugated because America is oppressive. They'll learn that Lockheed Martin is Auschwitz.

They'll learn that George W. Bush is a bigger terrorist than Osama bin Laden. And they'll learn (if their teacher is up on the latest prizes) that the International Documentary Association, in a poll of 2000 documentary filmmakers around the world, ranks Moore's anti-American rant as the “Best Documentary of All Time.”

TRUTHS

What they won't learn is that the last time around the French dealt with Hitler's appetite by tossing him a slice of Czechoslovakia... and then a piece of Poland... and then Paris.

They won't learn that France contributed more food to Nazi Germany than any other occupied territory.

They won't learn about how appeasement failed, or about the French sense of defeat, or the level of French collaboration with those who sought their destruction, or about those who met terror with submission.

“In the first month after liberation, France was aflame with the desire to punish anyone who sided with the Germans on any level,” writes Brandon Kyle Leniart.

“Perhaps the most hated were the women who literally slept with the enemy; they were stripped to their undergarments and seated in front of a large crowd that jeered them. Then they were shaved bald with swastikas painted on their faces so everyone would know for months what they had done. Some were even paraded in the streets with a sign saying ‘I whored with the Krauts.’”

And this time?

The answer this time is to show a Michael Moore film to the school kids; to preach pacifism at any cost; to cancel school trips to Britain; to deny that the Islamic fundamentalists are out to destroy Western civilization; to forget about the throats they cut on Sept. 11; to forget about the people who jumped from the windows of the 80th and 90th floors.